Teacher sample Author Memoir Mrs. Richter

*Please note the organization.*

*First paragraph -Summary is minimum five sentences which includes title and author name*

*Second Paragraph – set up sentence for quotes, parenthetical documentation, and* ***detailed*** *explanation of how each quotation fits a Big Ideas of the Identity course. The explanation is NOT a paraphrase of the quote . A sentence sets up the next connection to the EU …Quotations are from the beginning, middle and end of the memoir.*

*Third Paragraph- question stem is part of reflection.*

The memoir *I Feel Bad About My Neck* written by Nora Ephron is a humorous yet thoughtful viewpoint about different events, large and small, which occur in her life. She views aging as an inevitable part of life. She also recollects on empty nests, her encounters with the famous, and about life itself. She is known for her Oscar nominated screenplays and her writing style effectively engages the reader to look at her life through a comedic lens. Her moments in life are so humorous but poignant at the same time and one cannot help but laugh out loud at her accurate observations about being a woman of a “certain” age. By using humor, the author effectively makes her point about the absurd reality of trying to stay young forever and living life to the fullest no matter what age one is.

Ephron in her observation about women of a certain age is coming from a place of experience. “If I pass a mirror, I avert my eyes” (6). How true and sad because in American society today, youth is celebrated and older women feel uncomfortable literally in their own skin. This course is about identity and how fitting is an observation that in order to fit into society, many women accept the social norms of how it is normal to botox the facial expressions from one’s face. Also to stretch their facial skin tight and reach for their elusive ‘fountain of youth’ which is plastic surgery. Advertisements are everywhere on how to be forever youthful and women are taught at an early age not to look at wrinkles as a badge of honor , but to avert one’s eyes. If one does not want to spend a fortune on surgical procedures, Ephron also writes about spending a fortune on skin cream, so one can buy into being accepted by a youth- oriented society “…these bottles and jars are whimsical… and designed to make vulnerable, pitiable women like me shell out astronomical sums of money for useless products” (47). In addition to countless advertisements for botox and surgical procedures, women spend countless amounts of money and time to ward off the evil wrinkle. Infomercials scream at the viewer in the middle of the night to buy, buy , buy and take advantage of the latest miracle cream. It is somewhat alarming how many women feel obligated to fit into society’s standards that only a young face is a beautiful face. Another Big Idea of the course is how one’s identity is affected by their environment. Environment in this case is how one can have a life changing moment by reading a book. “Each minute I spend away from the book pretending to be interested in everyday life is a misery” (121). To escape into another world, to have characters become real, is a moment where one’s identity can be forever altered by the written word. The world moves on but in that moment one can become changed by words written on a page. It can be considered an environment in which one’s identity is changed for the better or possibly even a long-distance silent interaction, communication, with the author.

There are countless connections to myself I made while reading this memoir. Her ideas of when children move off to college and making their room something else… I now have large bedroom closets which hold all my shoes. The need to wear reading glasses to make print the size of a stop sign also resonated with me. How her environment defines her – the large world and her little world inside her home. The environment being indicative of one’s identity. Being lost in a book and how words can forever change how you view yourself or the world.

So many words she wrote on the page I could hear myself saying. She says even though children grow up, the worrying never ends.. How true are those words. I say all the time “I worry about worrying.” I tell my children all the time that no matter their age, I will always worry. Makes me wonder if it is because of the environment I grew up in or if it is in the DNA.

Her exercising to stay in shape but hurting herself while doing it and then needing to spend money at the doctor’s office is a vicious circle. I have done that. I remember tripping over the step in step class and then driving to the chiropractor to have everything realigned. Needless to say, I never went back to the class. It cost me too much money at the chiropractor.

I truly love this memoir. Her ability, her genius to bring humor to the page to make her message stronger. The memoir makes the reader think. I would recommend it to all women, any age. Because at some point, the young will be at this age and it will be a wonderful book to read now and truly understand that no matter how old a woman is, humor keeps one young forever.